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(DUBLIN 2)

Mark G. Manis, Director
International Policy Division
Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Room 4434 South
Washington, DC 21250

13th December 2000

Dear Mr. Manis,

Thank you for your letter of 12th September 2000 enclosing the draft final report of the on-site audit of the Republic of Ireland's meat inspection system which was carried out by Dr. Gary D. Bolstad, International Audit Staff Officer, from 14th April to 2nd May 2000.

We are pleased to note the overall conclusion of the audit that Ireland's inspection system was found, on the whole, to have effective controls to ensure that product destined for export to the United States was produced under conditions equivalent to those which FSIS requires in domestic establishments. We also note Dr. Bolstad's comments that:

1. the deficiencies encountered during the on-site establishment audits, in those establishments which were found to be acceptable, were adequately addressed to the auditor's satisfaction;
2. after observing the internal reviewers' activities in the field, the auditor was confident in their professionalism, thoroughness, and knowledge of U.S. requirements, and in the effectiveness of Ireland's internal review program as a whole;
3. Irish meat inspection authorities demonstrated a well-developed enforcement programme.

Yours sincerely,

M.C. Gaynor
Chief Veterinary Officer